

Stryker troops assist Iraqis secure Baghdad neighborhood

By Spc. Shea Butler
7th MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The ramp drops, the sun rises and the troops emerge. The missions vary and everyone has a different, but equally important job. The troops on the ground in Baghdad work every job from quick reaction force to humanitarian missions.

The mission for Soldiers with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, changes daily. Everyone has a different job in the company - from driver to gunner to dismounted infantry.

Even when they are not on an official mission they wait next to their Stryker vehicles for the call to duty out on the streets securing neighborhoods and assisting the Iraqi security forces at need.

The mission for the company Jan. 4 was to provide an outer cordon in a Baghdad neighborhood for the Iraqi



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th MPAD)

1st Sgt. Brad Kelley, a native of Grants Pass, Ore., and the senior noncommissioned officer with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker BCT, 2nd Infantry Division, speaks with residents in Baghdad through an interpreter Jan. 4.

Army. The joint operation joining the two entities would be a search for anti-Iraqi forces and weapons.

Prior to leaving the confines of their base camp, the troops of Company B prepared

their equipment and briefed each other to make sure they could successfully assist the Iraqi forces on the ground, said Cpl. Joseph Casiano.

Fourth platoon was doing oversight security on roof tops,

while other platoons were assisting the Iraqi troops search houses, said 1st Sgt. Brad Kelley, a native of Grants Pass,

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Troops work hard to make their camp a home away from home

By Spc. Courtney Marulli
2-2 Inf. Public Affairs

OBSERVATION POINT TROTTER, Iraq - While some Soldiers in Iraq are swimming for exercise and enjoying a large dining facility, others are in more primitive areas where portable toilets are a luxury and two long tables provide the only dining area.

Soldiers in Company C, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment have taken up resi-

dence at Observation Point Trotter and have starting giving the rundown facility a much-needed facelift.

1st Sgt. Kenneth D. Bosier, the top noncommissioned officer of the company, said the rest of the observation point has been redone to improve hygiene and make life more comfortable for the Soldiers.

Upon arriving at Trotter, the Goliad, Texas native said there were 10-foot reeds growing out of about two feet of standing water. Besides being an inconvenience,

this damp environment was a mosquito breeding ground. The water feeding the pond was leaking from the only shower trailer that was semi-operable.

Knowing that the water had to go, Bosier said his Soldiers swung into action draining the area and removing the tall reeds. Without the swamp present, the mosquitoes left and the area dried.

However, a shower was still a necessity-

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Iraqi army celebrates 86th birthday

By Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Iraqi army troops teamed up with their U.S. counterparts to celebrate the Iraqi army's 86th birthday Jan. 6 here.

Iraqi Army troops from the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) along with U.S. Soldiers celebrated the day.

The traditional date for the Iraqi army's activation is Jan. 6, 1921 when King Faisal (bin Hussein) I established the first true Iraqi army battalion in Baghdad.

Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Jamal Mal Allah Ahmed, the commander of 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. opened the ceremony with a speech prior to a cake cutting ceremony.

"Every year we come together to celebrate and remember the history of the Iraqi Army," Ahmed said. "Today we are working with our American friends to help all of the Iraqi people. In this new year of 2007, we ask God to help us rid Iraq of terrorists, and we come together today to honor all (past and present) Iraqi soldiers and all the people of Iraq."

In addition, Ahmed said he has nothing

but gratefulness and praise for the efforts of all of the people who are working to help the new Iraqi government by helping to uphold security and stability in Iraq.

For Capt. Khalid Hassan, an engineer with the 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div., the commemoration, he said, marks a time for writing a new history for a new Iraq.

"I'm glad that our army is making a new start, and I'm glad to work with the American Army which has a very good system and very good Soldiers," Hassan said. "But the Iraqi army needs more time to finish it's job (of transitioning)."

"The Iraqi army mission is very difficult but our hope is for peace for our families, our country and the same for the Americans," he added.

Soldiers in attendance said they enjoyed getting to dine with their Iraqi counterparts and hope to continue working with the IA and ISF to help transition them to the sovereignty of the Iraqi people.

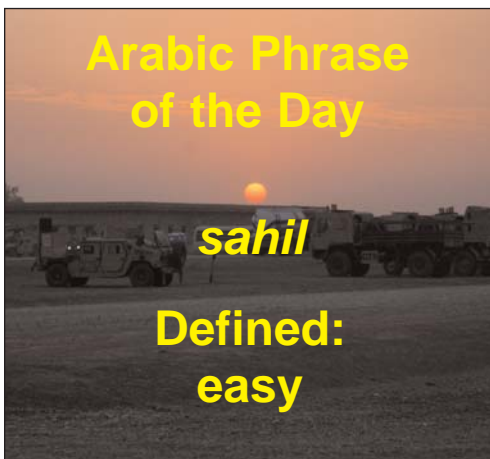
"It was a great honor to be invited here to join (the Iraqis) in their celebration," said Capt. Kevin Caflin, an advisor to the 9th IA Div. who belongs to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, "It's



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Brig. Gen. Jamal Mal Allah Ahmed and Col. Paul E. Funk II share the honor of cutting a cake, at the Iraqi Army's 86th birthday celebration.

a great tradition being able to celebrate Iraqi history and there's nothing that compares to sharing in the camaraderie with our Iraqi brothers."



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 56
Low: 37



Tomorrow

High: 57
Low: 36



Friday

High: 57
Low: 40

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.
Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl
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NCOIC, Print Production: Staff Sgt. Mary Rose
Editor: Sgt. Michael Garrett
Staff Writers: Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, Pfc. Ben Gable, Pfc. Shea Butler, Pfc. William Hatton
Contributing Writers: Amanda Kim Stairrett, Sgt. Jon Cupp, Sgt. Cheryl

Cox, Spc. Courtney Marulli
Contact the Daily Charge at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil.

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Soldiers spruce up swampy observation point

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ty. After looking around Bosier, found a water trailer that had been abandoned for two years.

Everything in the trailer was new - a gold mine covered in dust and mud.

"We cleaned it up and it's very nice," he said. "It even has working urinals."

Mud is always a risk - not just in trailers. Fine dust covers Trotter and when it rains, the dust turns to a thick mud. Bosier said the previous unit had to prepare to leave on mis-

sions an hour early because they would get stuck trying to leave.

His company is working of resolving this problem too.

In preparation for the rainy season, Bosier and his Soldiers constructed a wooden boardwalk that connects two buildings and the shower trailers.

The next phase is to get rocks to cover the rest of the dusty ground.

"We prepare for the rainy season so we can conduct operations in an efficient manner," he said.

That isn't the only reason for making improvements though.

"We are learning this is our home and if we don't take care of it, no one will," he said.

Many of his Soldiers are just starting to realize that this will be their home for the next 10 months, and are beginning

to take ownership, he said.

Part of taking care of Trotter is daily chores such as raking and removing debris so the ground can be leveled. They are even planning on putting in a horseshoe pit, he said.

Throughout the process, Bosier said he has learned that if things need to get done he and his Soldiers have to rely on themselves.

Bosier said the company has plenty of resources within its own ranks. Many of his Soldiers have backgrounds as certified electricians, contractors and other occupations.

When the day is done though, they do take a little time for themselves too.

For entertainment, Bosier said his Soldiers have started boxing nights, watch movies and sometimes play cards. There are also plans to build a gym and a volleyball court.



(Photo by Spc. Courtney Marulli, 2-2 Inf. Public Affairs)

Soldiers with Co. C, 1st Bn, 9th Inf. Reg., 2nd Bct, 2nd Inf. Div. put their muscles into making Observation Point Trotter, their new home, a nicer place to live.

Troops take weapons off Baghdad's streets

Stryker

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Ore.

They didn't come away empty-handed.

"A cache of 12 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, six grenades and many small arms were found," said 2nd Lt. Jacob Czekanski, a Silver Creek, N.Y., native. "The mission was accomplished."

After much preparation and a long day Company B and the Iraqi troops completed their mission, making a Baghdad neighborhood a little safer in the process.

"We empowered the IA and built their confidence," Czekanski said. "No one got hurt, so it was a successful day."

With the mission complete, Co. B and the Iraqi troops parted ways and headed back to their respective base camps to plan and prepare for their next mission together.



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th MPAD)

Spc. David Tunstall, a native of Alexandria, Va., with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, searches the top of a vehicle in Baghdad during a joint cordon and search mission with Iraqi troops Jan.4.

Soldiers deliver wheelchairs to injured Iraqis

By Sgt. Cheryl Cox
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq - Building relationships with the local population is the first step in building a safe, secure and stable environment for the people of Iraq.

The Soldiers of Company C, 414th Civil Affairs Battalion spent Jan. 7 doing just that by helping people, providing them with wheelchairs and sewing materials.

The day began with the Soldiers visiting the Taji Qada Qada (City Council Building) to deliver 19 wheelchairs to families in need.

"We have had these wheelchairs for a while, and have just been waiting for a date to deliver them to the families," explained Capt. William LeFever, a team leader with

Co. C, 414th CA Bn. "We are now working to get more."

Due to severe injuries and a lack of vaccines, many Iraqi people, young and old, are unable to walk and need the assistance of a wheelchair to get around easily.

One family that received a wheelchair has a five-year-old girl, Fatima Abdullzahra, who will never be able to walk.

"Fatima was thrown by her sister when she was a baby and it injured her legs," said her mother, Alham Hassam. "We have always just put her on the ground, but now we can take her outside. I am so happy."

It wasn't just the families who were happy about the delivery.

The Soldiers were also very happy about the reactions from the people receiving the



Capt. William LeFever, a team leader with Company C, 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, talks to Lukman Rahman, who is in charge of the Al-Assriah Women's Center, about a new list of supplies that needs to be turned in to the city council and to civil affairs officials before the items can be purchased or work can begin.

wheelchairs.

"It is so good to see them smile after being immobilized for so long," said Sgt. 1st Class Bonita Jones, of Co. C, 414th

CA Bn. "All the older woman just smile and put their hands in the air as they sit in the wheelchair for the first time."

As the day progressed and all 19 wheelchairs were handed out and it was time for the Soldiers to go to their next destination to hand out supplies to the Al-Assriah Women's Clinic.

When the Soldiers arrived at the women's clinic the unloaded several boxes that contained a sewing machine, material and other items needed for the women to sew at the center.

The clinic was designed for the women of Al-Assriah to have a place to work. The women can sew clothes to be sold on the local market or just sew clothes for their families.

At the end of the day, the Soldiers of Co. C said they felt as though they had made an impact of the lives of many people and were ready to get back to Camp Taji to begin the planning and arrangements for future missions to assist the people of Taji and other local communities.



(Photos by Sgt. Cheryl Cox, 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Fatima Abdullzahra, a 5-year-old girl, is placed into her new wheelchair by her mother Ahlam Hassam at the Taji city council building Jan. 7.

Officials from Fort Hood visit wounded Soldiers

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Killeen Daily Herald

SAN ANTONIO - Popeyes fried chicken might not be a big deal to most people, but the comfort food was a welcome treat Saturday for several wounded Soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center.

Making it more special still was the delivery team - Col. Larry Phelps, 1st Cavalry Division rear commander and Wendy Fil, wife of Maj. Gen.

Joseph F. Fil, commander of the 1st Cavalry and Multinational Division-Baghdad.

The two and others from the Fort Hood community, including Col. Duane Brewer, rear chaplain; retired Brig. Gen. Art Juno and the wives of the First Team's other two generals, traveled to Brooke to meet with the wounded Soldiers.

The trip to Brooke was part of a regular visit Phelps

tries to make weekly. Saturday's special delivery was a follow up on a previous request.

"They really don't want you to do anything," he said of the usual responses he gets from the Soldiers. So, on a previous trip Phelps changed his question, "What can I bring you?"

The answer? "Popeyes chicken, sir."

Phelps was glad to oblige.

He said the trips to Brooke are important because they show the injured Soldiers that somebody cares and that their leaders are still monitoring the progress of 1st Cavalry Soldiers.

The visits are a morale boost for Soldiers, Phelps said, because when they find out a general's wife has come to check on them, they understand that the division still feels they're important.

Wendy Fil looks at each of the Soldiers like they are her kids, Phelps said, and one of those visited Saturday told her to tell the general, "Hi."

Phelps said a majority of the 1st Cavalry Soldiers injured in Iraq are sent to Brooke. But he also plans to visit wounded

Soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., next week when he travels there.

The visits also provide a means for the Soldiers to keep connected - asking questions about the continuing mission and how their comrades are doing.

Phelps said that asking what's on Soldiers' minds usually brings a common response.

"The first thing they always ask is how their buddies are, and what their units are doing," he said.

The bond between "those kids," the Soldiers, is stronger than the injury that takes one out of the fight, Phelps said. "They need to know what is going on and how their fellow Soldiers are doing without them."

The wounded Soldiers are fighting just as hard, if not harder, than the Soldiers down-range, he said.

Phelps said checking in on the wounded Soldiers and seeing their determination is the "single most morale-boosting thing" for him.

"It's just hard to walk out of there thinking about yourself."



(Photo by Travis Bartoshek, Killeen Daily Herald)

Col. Larry Phelps, right, talks with Wendy Fil, wife of 1st Cavalry Division Commander Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., before visiting wounded Soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio on Jan 6.

TELEVISION



	8:00p.m.	8:30p.m.	9:00p.m.	9:30p.m.	10:00p.m.	10:30p.m.	11:00p.m.
	Sports Center		NFL Live	NBA Fastbreak (9:20)	College Gamenight (9:40)	Sports Center	Men's College Basketball
	Prime News Tonight		NBC Nightly News	ABC World News	Sesame Street		CSI
	Special Report with Brit Hume		Your World Neil Cavuto		World News Now		ATS/Regional News